The

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

No. 139 JANUARY, 1919. PRICE THREE HALFPENCE
2s. per annum post free

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Notes of the Month.

We wish all our readers and friends a very Happy New Year. How thankful we are that our wishes go forth from the atmosphere and vantage point of peace. Since the beginning of 1915 our New Year thoughts were faintly tinged by the colour of hope that each year begun might see the end of the terrible world-conflict. But how great is the difference now, when hopes are realised and hostilities have actually ceased. Despite the problems the year 1919 will inevitably bring, we feel that nothing can be so burdensome, so grievous, as the fact that each passing day merely added to the already too numerous victims of war. Now all that is passed, and ere the year has long begun, we trust the deliberations of the Peace representatives will strengthen and make assured the results of the armistice. May the spirit of unselfish and large-sighted wisdom actuate all the representatives of the peoples so that with full accord of mind and heart they may build strong, stable foundations on which a new world structure may stand. The work of reconstruction is formidable, and many months may elapse before the ravages of war are replaced by the fair creations of peace. We shall need patience, as well as intelligent understanding of the tremendous tasks needing to be undertaken. We have a duty to the countries left stripped and bare by ruthless invasion. In whole-hearted endeavour on their behalf, as well as by unselfish and clear-sighted concern for our own, we may reap the advantage of victory secured by strenuous co-operation at home and abroad. Let us not be weary in well-doing, believing that in due time we shall reap, if we faint not, the results of long-continued and heroic endeavour.

* *

We look forward to the time when the young men who left our homes and congregations to fight on sea and land and in the air, will be able to take up again their former peaceful pursuits. In the meantime some are in Germany maintaining their watch on the Rhine; others, who were in Germany as prisoners of war, have been released and restored to their rejoicing friends.

We are glad to learn that the Rev. Percival Godding arrived safely at home some time ago, and we sincerely hope that he was none the worse for his trying imprisonment. Unfortunately, questions of transport have delayed the return of other prisoners, but we hope that ere long everyone will have reached his homeland.

* *

Our readers would learn with heartfelt sympathy of the death of Miss Isabella Riddel, of Belfast. A member of a family long intimately connected with our community, she was highly respected, not alone for her works' sake, but also for the sake of her character and disposition. It is not very long ago that many members of our different congregations enjoyed the generous and gracious hospitality of Beechmount, on the occasion of the garden party given there during General Synod week. Then, as always, the two sisters spared no pains to make their guests feel at home, and we know how successful and much appreciated their efforts were. That act of kindness was but typical of others too numerous to mention, and we merely mention it here because it was part of the uniformly generous kindness manifested to the members of our Non-Subscribing Church. None could ever doubt how near the cause of the latter, and all its congregations, was to the heart of Miss Isabella Riddel. She will be greatly missed, especially by her only surviving sister, with whom we feel the deepest sympathy in her sad and unexpected bereavement.

* *

We would remind the local treasurers in our different congregations that it is desirable to get in the subscriptions for the Orphan Society as early as possible. Last year there was a slight improvement on previous years, but there is still a tendency to over-run the time limit imposed by the official auditor. All subscriptions should be in the hands of the treasurer, Mr. A. Kennedy Stewart, before the end of March, while the lists should be forwarded to the secretary, the Rev. A. Turner, of Templepatrick.

A Thought for the Month

THE NEW START.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward."—EXODUS xiv. 15.

The command to them is the watchword for us:—"Go forward!" As regards the passage of time, this is an irresistible decree! We cannot put back the hand on our dial; we cannot stay the passing hours; we cannot prevent the departing years; and as we go forward we wonder and know not what each new year will bring forth! Those who believe that they infallibly listen to a divine command, have nothing else to do but obey it; those who are the mere creatures of instinct, press on without misgiving; and those who suppose they follow their manifest destiny, go forward, come what may!

What is before us in the coming year, we know not. Some may remain in the old scenes: some may enter new ones. Those who still abide here may experience changes which they little anticipate. If you are convinced that you are in the way of duty, go forward hopefully—trustingly. If you seek a land of promise, be not dismayed, if for a time you are led away from it into the wilderness. It may be that in that wilderness your faith and your courage must be proved. And if even on the high road, that seemed so plain, darkness should shroud you, fears should molest you, lose not your confidence in God, doubt not that all things work together for good to them that love Him. No pillar of cloud or fire may denote His guidance, but the spirit of Christ shall lead you.

When Moses led the Israelites to the promised land, he carried with him the bones of the patriarch Joseph, who, centuries before, had desired to be buried with his fathers.

As we go forward to our heavenly home, we bear in remembrance the death of the beloved Son. We take with us on our march no mortal remains,

but immortal hopes; for he who was dead has conquered death, and is alive for evermore. We go on, following those who have lived after the power of the life eternal. It is no pillar of cloud, but the cloud of witnesses to the love of the Heavenly Father, that guides us on our way. We fear not the wilderness; it is not lonesome while we feel them near. We dread not the sea—the narrow sea of death. They have entered it—we trust they have passed it safely. Voices from the promised land—the heavenly country—the Father's house—all repeat the same divine command:—Go forward!" —Russell Lant Carpenter.

OUR VITAL MESSAGE.

By Ullin.

What is a vital message? In the day that the Law-giver of Israel gave the law to the people he said, in the name of the Lord, "Behold, I have set before you this day life and death. Choose life!" That law made the Jewish people what they are to-day—a nation without a country to call its own, dispersed throughout the nations of the world. What was according to the law to them was right: what was contrary was wrong. Righteousness then was the living word to Israel—their vital message to the world. Obedience to that word meant liberty—meant the bond of national union and integrity, however bitter the persecution and fierce the storm of blood and fire which often has been the fate of that remarkable people. What did the law embrace? Everything in life, from the worship of God to the washing of pots and pans. Religion meant Right Life to them. Time crystallises, and the form and outward ceremony become exalted at the expense of the ensouling life: the letter kills, the spirit gives life. The righteous God becomes the austere judge—the God of vengeance and of terror. In fulness of time He who was the glory of the people Israel appeared and gave a new living word, opened up a new and living way, and proclaimed the Love of the Father. Not to destroy, but to fulfil, did He come. The nation had learned of Righteousness and Justice; but it had become stiff-necked, hard, fanatical, bigoted, exclusive. They were "the chosen people": all others were "dogs." Notwithstanding their profession of religion, they had become materialistic, they had come into the shadow of death, but the people that sat in darkness saw a great light, and once more was the choice given between Life and Death in the new law—the law of Love. The value of the individual was recognised, and individualism developed in the nations of the West, carrying with it intense competition. That phase is giving way before a new order; the old system has collapsed in the great war, and all political parties are bent on reconstruction. The world awaits a new word. But in the new religion that Christ gave the value of the individual set going separate tendencies: sects, each of which in itself was largely a separate religion, unfolded one after the other. Catholicism, Protestantism. In the former divisions called Orders, and in the latter divisions called Denominations were brought into being. Surely each community had its own word! The Universe itself is called into being by the Word, without which nothing was made that has been made: that Word whose first letter begins with the dawn of creation and whose last letter ends with its close. That Word in its entirety is out of time and space, at the centre as it were, but at the circumference its intonation is prolonged throughout the ages, and the words which nations and religions individually speak are fragments of the great Word, as is also the dominating note of each individual's life, for as an old Egyptian saying has it, "Each must shape his life according to the Word," and Mazzini wrote, "God has written a word over the cradle of every nation, and that is the nation's mission to mankind."

Does not that apply to each separate Church? Does it not apply to the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland? If not, of what use are

we? If the message we have to give is only the same one that any other Church can give, then why continue the struggle any longer? Why endure the ostracism and boycotting, the furtive insidious opposition which would close our schools, seize our meeting-houses, exclude our young people from being teachers, which shuts our ministers out from taking their place on an equality with others, either as workers in the Y.M.C.A.* or as Army Chaplains? If we have no vital message to give, if there is not one distinct word to the world entrusted to us to speak out and witness to, even the peril of death itself, then let us all go over in a body to some more popular Church. Let us bow ourselves in the Temple of Rimmon, and repeat the shibboleth that shall be our pass-word. "Only a Mass," said the would-be patrons of Giordano Bruno when a high post in the University of Paris was offered to him; but it meant that now and again he would have to attend Mass. "Only a Lie," replied Bruno. Greatest of hypocrisies is it to recite the formulæ of belief: to have the words on the lips without the consent of the heart. Easy is it to write one's name, but is it easy to write it as consenting to outworn and contradictory dogma, even though there be a mental reservation which renders the subscription nugatory? Which is the better choice—to face a congregation of hundreds and enjoy the popularity to which subscription has opened the door, or to stand before the faithful few, who have endured through all the long years of the past, who have kept the flag of religious liberty in its true meaning, flying amid all storms.

In what way was the teaching of Christ different from what had gone before: in what way was it vital? The Jews *believed;* Christ said it was possible to *know*, and that knowledge is eternal life. That knowledge was a great prize—it had to be striven for, but it was a goal worth all possible striving. Ours is it to make of human life a science, and not a gamble: to show Christianity to be the science of manhood, a sound mind in a sound body, a clean life, a pure heart, an eager intellect, an unveiled spiritual perception—such is our Vital Message.

*The Y.M.C.A. has very considerably modified its attitude to our ministers, as is evidenced by the fact that several of them have served under its auspices with the troops in France and Belgium.—Ed. N.S.P.

OUR CHURCHES AND RECONSTRUCTION.

AN APPEAL FOR THE UNION FOR SOCIAL SERVICE.

By Rev. E. H. Pickering, M.A., Hon. Secretary of the N.S.P.C.I. Union for Social Service.

I am instructed by my Committee to bring the following points to the notice of the members of our Church:—

I. Whatever may be the case with other Churches, the essential meaning and value of our Church depends on the practical Christianity of its members.

II. Owing to the great upheaval caused by the war, and the numerous difficulties which are bound to arise before the thoughts and activities of men can be diverted to the work of peace, we are face to face with the prospect of social changes of far-reaching significance to the material and spiritual well-being of mankind.

III. Unless a proper spirit of mutual helpfulness prevails, these vast changes threaten to be accompanied by grave disorder and tumult.

IV. The aim of the Union is the creation of a proper spirit by means of encouraging practical Christian service, and serious, sympathetic study of the problems requiring solution, so that, as in the earliest days of Christianity, the Church may become, in the best sense of the word, one world-wide friendly society, each member being ready and willing to bear another's burden, and to understand the needs of society at large, judging them not on the grounds of self-interest or class and party bias, but in accordance with the Christian principles of the eternal

value of every human soul. Then, although members might belong to different political camps, they would vote and work, not so much to secure a party advantage, as for the sake of the general weal. If the spirit were the same in all, ultimately the issue would be the same. Nothing would so elicit a social as opposed to a partisan spirit as the free discussion, in little groups formed for practical social work and study of the various aspects of the social problems of the day.

V. We urgently appeal to all the ministers and members of our Church to join the Union by sending at once a subscription (minimum 1/-), and asking to be enrolled. We further appeal to those who can afford it, to send donations of 5/-, 10/6, or £1 1s. or more, as we need a large fund in order to make the Union effective.

VI. We also invite the immediate co-operation of all our ministers in such work as (*a*) ventilating the objects of the Union in special sermons on Sunday, 19th January, or as near that date as possible; (*b*) either forming themselves, or putting the Executive Committee in touch with those who are willing to form local groups of the Union in the individual churches. These groups would be autonomous and self-supporting, but should consist of those who have enrolled themselves members of the Union.

We would appeal especially to the Unity Guild to help us in our work by using their self-existing organization for the purpose of forming local groups in the churches constituting the Guild.

VII. The matter is urgent. Vast social changes are impending. The Churches are on their trial. Our Church is free to take up this matter most effectively. All that is needed is energy and goodwill on the part of our members. Let us begin the New Year well! The Executive Committee of the Union, provided that the necessary financial and personal support is forthcoming, intends to give all possible publicity to every effort made to translate our religious principles into practical activity, and to uplift our practical activity to the level of our religious principles, so that in a spirit of humble Christian service we may give effect to our Lord's command, "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

VIII. Further information will be readily furnished on application to the hon. secretary, Rev. E. H. Pickering, M.A., 44 Marlborough Park S., Belfast. The Executive also hopes to be able to make arrangements whereby some of the publications of the Union for Social Service, founded in connection with the National Conference, may be distributed amongst members and intending members. This Union is doing admirable work in England, and publishes "The Social Service Quarterly," and has also issued a syllabus particularly adapted for study circles, etc., entitled, "The Churches and Social Problems." In conclusion, the earnest attention of all readers is called to the appended Constitution.

CONSTITUTION.

Approved by the General Purposes Committee of the N.S.P.C.I., on Thursday, 17th October, 1918.

1. NAME.—This Union shall be called the N.S.P.C.I. Union for Social Service.

2. OBJECT.—To inspire Social Service with the Religious Spirit, and to direct the Religious Spirit toward Social Service.

3. METHODS.—(*a*)—Educational work designed to promote knowledge of social problems from the religious standpoint, carried on by the following means:—

(1) Meetings arranged for by the Union Executive.
(2) Branches for social study in the individual churches.
(3) Special courses of sermons delivered in the various churches.

(*b*) Practical social service, such as:

(1) Help given to the Minister in cases of sickness, unemployment or poverty.
(2) Public work on such bodies as the Board of Guardians and Public Health and Child Welfare Committees, etc.

(*c*) Co-operation with other bodies which are grappling with social problems.

4. MEMBERSHIP.—Anyone connected with a church on the roll of the N.S.P.C.I. who is in sympathy with the objects of the Union, shall be eligible for membership on payment of a subscription not less than 1/-.

The Committee shall have power to admit any other sympathiser with the object of the Union.

5. ORGANIZATION.—The Officers shall be — a President (the Moderator), Treasurer and Secretary, who, together with not less than 7 or more than 10 other members, shall form the Executive Committee

Hon. Vice-Presidents may be appointed.

6. The individual churches of the N.S.P.C.I. shall be encouraged to form branches of the Union with their own officers.

MYSTICISM.

" In Palestine, as Christ, He gave the message of self-sacrifice, of martyrdom, for God and in the service of man. Thenceforth He has been watching, guiding, for the World-Teacher stands behind all teaching. . . . He is the source of Mysticism.

For what is mysticism? When in the world there comes winter, and snow is everywhere on the ground and on the trees, yet, if you have eyes to look, in every leafless twig there are hidden the leaves that are to come, for before the winter comes all is made ready for the spring; so is it, too, with life: there come the periods when civilisations flourish, but also their day of decadence, when civilisations must perish and go. But also, then, there are being woven the buds of the new civilisation. And that is mysticism, that which realises the eternity of things when outwardly all things seem impermanent. It is this mysticism that comes in religion, in the poets, in the artists, in every type of the dreamer: above all, in those who are impatient with the orthodox ideas in religion, or in science, or art. Wherever you have unorthodoxy that is the sign there is to be a new spring; when there are signs of the breaking up of civilisation, signs of the " new " times, they show that a Great Teacher is at work weaving new vestures for humanity.—From " The Message of the Future."

LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

(To be used in accordance with the Scheme of Instruction for 1919, issued by the Sunday School Committee of the N.S.P.C.I.)

General note about the Parables.—A parable is generally regarded as a story about ordinary, every-day things, which helps us to understand higher and more spiritual things. Strictly, however, a parable need not be a complete story, and Jesus himself uses the word to describe what is not so much a story as an illustration. Consequently in this series of parables from St. Matthew will be found many of our Lord's most striking illustrations which we are not in the habit of thinking of as parables. Several reasons are suggested for our Lord's use of parables, but certainly one reason is his general tendency to link earthly and heavenly things in the most intimate relationship. He found the meaning of earth in the promise of Heaven, and saw realized in Heaven all that is lost in earth. Thus, he was speaking in parables when he described God as our Father, seeking to lead us to understand the beauty of the Divine love by means of earthly love. Whereas the commonplace mind only sees earthly things as mere things of earth, Jesus saw them as foreshadowings of heavenly things. Hence his natural speech was in parable.

January 5. *Fishers of men* (*Christian discipleship*). Read Matthew iv. xviii. 22. Key text, Matt. iv. 19.

Introduction.—This is the first of a series of parables dealing with our conduct as Christians, and it expresses most aptly the general character of Christian discipleship.

1. *Calling the first disciples.* The wonderful thing about Jesus was that

he did not care what class his disciples belonged to, but was able to call all sorts, even the humblest, and inspire them with his great ideals. His first disciples—Peter, Andrew, James, and John—were just simple fishermen whom he caught at their daily toil. There is no doubt, therefore, that he desires all of us, no matter who we are, to be his disciples. Little children and young people are just as welcome as the great and wise. Read the hymn "The wise may bring their learning."

2. *The response to the call.* Jesus said, "follow me," "and they straightway followed him." They did not wait to make any arrangements, nor to ask him where he was going, how they would live. None has really heard the call of Jesus unless it seems to him to be the only important thing to heed. Everyone of us receives the call in some shape and form. Whenever we are given the opportunity to be noble, generous, or helpful, that is the call, and we must immediately obey. It is no use saying, "Oh, I am too busy, too young, or too weak," or "It will be very awkward or unpleasant." Opportunities soon pass by, and if we hesitate and put off, we find that our chance is gone. There is a moment for the right word, and for the kind deed. Speak and act at that moment and we follow Jesus.

2. *Fishers of men.* (See key text). This is the parable. In these words Jesus showed, by using language they could understand, the high vocation before them. They knew how to fish; well, now they were to fish for men—to catch them for a better life. They had to work much in the same way, but their object was different. Had Jesus been in Belfast he would very likely have told us to be weavers of souls and builders of ships that would float amidst life's stormy seas. Whatever we do, we can give it a spiritual meaning by doing it for the glory of God and the service of men. Each man has work to do; let each one do it in a Christian spirit. Even the poor monk who could only turn somersaults, or that poor helpless fellow who could only smile on the children, were blessed, because they did what they could in a right spirit.

January 12. *The salt of the earth and the city on a hill.*—(*good deeds*). Read Matthew v. 13–16. Key rext, Matt. v. 16.

1. *The salt of the earth.* There could be no apter description of a good Christian. We all know the extraordinary difference a little salt makes in our food. Without it the food is flat, unpleasant, and often unwholesome. The duty of the Christian is to flavour the earth. Without such eminently Christian virtues as justice, generosity friendliness and purity, life would be flat, unpleasant, and unwholesome. Many folk mistakenly think that Christianity is only concerned with getting us to heaven, and has nothing to do with this life. On the contrary, it is the spirit of Christianity alone that can make this life fit for those who hope for heaven. Every time we miss a chance of brightening things up, we are omitting the pinch of salt which makes all the difference. Moreover, Christians (and all of us who come to church and Sunday School take the name Christian) are bound to be "salters." If they have no Christian flavour, then they are useless rubbish.

2. *The city on a hill.* Just because children come to Sunday School more is expected of them. All of us who are connected with church and Sunday School are like a city on a hill. They stand out. If then our behaviour is ugly, it is all the uglier, because everybody can see it; or if it is beautiful, it is the more beautiful, because it can be seen a long way off. (For elder scholars stress the importance of church membership. It rests on them to let their light shine so that other folk may judge the quality of their religion). Then Jesus proceeds to show the folly of not letting our light shine forth by means of the parable of the light under the bushel. What possible use is a lighted candle under a cover? As Christians, we presumably have the light. It is our duty, then, to shine by means of good and noble deeds. Read Hans Andersen's little story "The Snail and the

Rose Tree." The snail kept in his shell because he thought one so great as he should keep himself to himself. One day, he said, he was going to show the world what he could do. So he did nothing, and because he did nothing, we have no reason for believing he could do anything. But the rose tree bloomed and shed beauty and fragrance around, so that everyone knew how sweet and lovely she was. Even though we may think folk are not noticing, yet, like the rose tree, we must shine forth in good deeds. Someone will know, and someone will be all the happier.

3. *The Key Text.* Some folks may say: But isn't it showing off to let men see our good works? It all depends on the reason for our good works. Some folk may do a good deed in order to get money, others, like the Pharisees, simply in order to show off. But if we do good because we want to do good, then we are not showing off. What we are doing is showing to men that our religion means something, and then they will be more inclined to believe in our religion and glorify God.

January 19. *The tree and its fruits—(good deeds).* Read Matthew vii. 15–20. Key text, Matt. vii. 17.

1. *False prophets.* In the first place our Lord warns us against heeding false teaching and bad advice. Now, the trouble is that so much false teaching and bad advice seems most attractive. Most of us have some ambition or conceit; most of us have some prejudices or some weaknesses, and if the false voice appeals to these things we find it very attractive. Thus, "think what a fine fellow you will seem," or, "think how easy and pleasant it will be," or, "think how dirty and ill-dressed are these folk who pretend to be in need," are very attractive on the surface, and many will yield to them. In the story of the Temptation, for instance, our Lord really had something to resist, because the evil spirit gave him most attractive reasons for yielding. In the first, "You are hungry." Now that of itself is a very good reason. In the second, "You will be proving your faith in God." Could anything sound better? In the third, "Men will worship and serve you." Surely that was most desirable?

2. *By their fruits ye shall know them.* He applied, to use the term that is very frequent now-a-days, "the acid test" of experience. What would happen, he asked himself, if I were to yield? He knew that what would happen would be the devil's triumph. Men would say that you can do anything. If you are hungry, that it was right to be foolhardy; that it was our duty to lord it over other people, and so on. It is not the tree that we must look at, but the fruits. If we want grapes we go to a fruitful vine, not to the bramble tree. So if we are to do good, we must not expect good to come from such bad reasons as selfishness, laziness, or pride. If we are in any doubt as to the advice given, let us ask ourselves, will it bring forth good fruit?" Shall we be happier; will the world be better from our selfishness, laziness, or pride?

3. *The Key Text.* A good tree always produces good fruit. We must e right within if we are to result in good deeds If we always act from good Christian motives, then we need have no fear about the result. We may not achieve the result easily, nor may we be thanked for it always. But God, who trieth the heart, He will bless us, and in His good time we shall reap the harvest. Yet, remember all along, these two points. We must judge others' teaching and advice by the results; we must judge our own results by the motive. If our motive is a cruel thorn, we cannot expect a refreshing grape.

E. H. P.

SIX MONTHS IN A GERMAN PRISON CAMP.

THE JOURNEY.

By Rev. Percival Godding, Second Lieutenant.

What a cheering prospect after having awakened suddenly from a horrid nightmare to be asked to care-

fully describe it in detail! Well that, Mr. Editor, is what you have given me to do, when you ask me to describe those six months in a Gefangenenlager; and yet the retrospection will not be so bad after all. It is another story to have to recall those past six months with their tragedies and comedies, dark shades and light reliefs—now that it is all over.

Only a very small remnant of our battalion was left alive when the battle had rolled on, on the morning of the 27th May, 1918. The events that preceded my capture will be for ever vividly impressed in my memory, but you must allow me to reverently leave them there. So many good friends, close chums, "went West" that fateful morning. Thank God it was for a noble cause.

We had hurriedly given "first aid" to the wounded, and improvised stretchers of great-coats or tunics before moving off. Then the move towards Germany began. A terrible, terrible journey it was, with the suffering of the wounded, many of whom died before evening from lack of care and of thirst. Ten miles we went, mostly over rough, hard ground, shell-holed by our artillery. (Think what that meant for those poor wounded boys!) That march—nay, that straggle—took about 7 hours. We passed thousands upon thousands of the enemy transport pouring through the line (as we thought then), with their travelling kitchens. There was not given to us a crust of bread, nor even a sip of water to the wounded. These, the wounded, were at last taken from us, and our journey was then a little speedier. About 11 o'clock that night (we had started about 9 in the morning) we arrived at our "billets" for the night. You would have wished to sweep the place out before putting your horse there—a small filthy barn, about 15 feet by 10 feet. Twenty of us slept on the stone floor, and slept, oh so well! We were dead tired. We had nothing to eat. Three days that journey lasted—about 70 kilometres altogether—and we had a little soup, cabbage soup with a few grains of barley in it, on the fourth morning. That was our first taste of food. That day, along a hot, dry, dusty road, we passed through a small French village. Other prisoners had gradually augmented our numbers, and we were now about 400 officers all told—250 French and 150 British. The villagers came out with pails of lovely, clear, cool water, with mugs to drink from, and some of us began to drink. Immediately our guards saw it, they rode straight at those villagers, knocking over the pails and pushing the women (and old men) away with the butt end of their rifles. We, of course, were helpless to interfere, and were gruffly ordered "Losziehen!" —which must have meant (from their tones) to hurry on. But we could hardly lift one foot before the other let alone hurry.

Late that night we arrived at a distributing camp, where we stayed three nights and two days. We were told early the first morning to expect some soup, but must supply our own vessels. But how? In the yard—we had in the camp a shell-shattered house with just the ground floor left. In the yard of this house was a refuse heap. We found old empty tins here, which we cleaned with soil and wiped with our tunics, and thus had vessels for our cabbage and turnip soup. The second day we had a little horse flesh in the soup, and 1 oz. of German bread per head. We were also given small tubs of water—20 of us had a whole tub to ourselves! No soap (never saw any in Germany save what we received from our parcels 4 months later, but of that anon), and no towels. And the lice! I counted 35 that night before "turning in." It was a filthy camp. They told us that Russians had been there before us. This may have explained, but I do not see how it excused the wretched state the place was in. On the third day here we started our last march—about 4 kilometres to the train. We travelled fourth class through the loveliest of scenery (the Black Forest), a three days' journey. We were given a small loaf between 3 (told to be a ration for 2 days), and the most of us were so improvident

as to eat it all at once! Each night we were marched to a large tent (or tin hut), and given a lovely large bowl of thick barley soup. We understood these were stations for feeding the troops on the way to the front. I am writing a great deal about food, but you see that is because we had so little of it. Two thoughts were uppermost in our minds those days. Food (anxious thoughts about!) and "what have our dear ones at home been told, and when can we write to them and relieve their anxiety?" That journey ended at 1 o'clock in the morning, and we were marched to our camp (our permanent camp).

MEMORIAL NOTICES.

JAMES DONNAN, CLOUGH.

With profound regret we announce the death of James, son of James Donnan, Annsborough, who passed away with tragic suddenness on Friday, November 15th, at his father's residence. The deceased was 28 years of age, and his life was most promising. His death caused widespread sorrow in the neighbourhood, and heartfelt sympathy is felt for the sorrowing parents, brothers, and sister. He was a most exemplary son and brother—a fine young man in every way, very popular, and highly esteemed by his employers, Messrs. Murland & Co., and all his acquaintances, and beloved by all his friends.

He was well known in many social circles, and was connected with many Lodges, such as the L.O.L. No. 356, the Royal Black Institution (Castlewellan Preceptory No. 15), and also the Masonic Lodge 1009.

His funeral to Clough on the following Saturday was unusually large, at which there were representatives of every class and creed. The coffin was covered with many beautiful wreathes, one of which was sent by Mr. and Mrs Murland and another by the members of the L.O.L. and R.B.P. The latter, acting as bearers, carried the coffin part of the way. At the church Rev. J. D. Davies, in a touching discourse, remarked that the deceased throughout his brief life had shown the same God-fearing spirit as did his forefathers, whose names are interwoven in the history of Clough Church; and as to his disposition, he was unassuming and lovable; he was loyal and faithful in every duty—from the smallest to the most sacred, and he possessed a godly character and a winning personality. As he was laying down a firm foundation whereon to build a noble, useful, Christian life, he was suddenly called hence to his Eternal Home, and his death means a serious loss to the Church and the community.

At the graveside, with the members of the R.B.P. gathered round the grave, the concluding service was performed in accordance with the ordinances of the Royal Black Institution.

* *

MISS ISABELLA RIDDEL,

of Beechmount, Belfast.

To the heartfelt regret of many friends the above lady passed away at her residence, Beechmount, Belfast, on December 29th. Her demise came as a shock, since few people were aware that she was confined to bed with bronchitis. But the first fe ling was one of profound sympathy for her only surviving sister, thus suddenly and sadly bereaved of the loved companion of many years. Yet the loss is one in which a very wide circle will share. The generous supporter of many good causes—civic, educa tional, philanthropic, religious—she was unstinted and untiring in her sympathetic and unassuming kindness. Self-effacing, and averse by disposition to publicity of any kind, she nevertheless had the deepest and most delicate sympathy in public activities, which she furthered whole-heartedly and continuously. Her name, and that of her elder sister, Miss Riddel, will be perpetuated in the Women's Hostel of Queen's University, which their great generosity called into being and endowed. Yet that was but one of many proofs of their interest in educa-

tional institutions. The Royal Victoria Hospital received many benefactions from the same generous patrons, the Riddel Ward being but one recorded gift. While many individual congregations of the Non-Subscribing Church had reason to appreciate their practical sympathy, special objects like the Sustentation Fund benefited by their beneficence; nor was the latter lacking to objects across the water, like the Unitarian Home Missionary College. local institutions, like the Belfast Domestic Mission, received equally timely and generous assistance. The Riddel family was always intimately connected with the First Presbyterian Church, Rosemary Street, Belfast, and the latter owes much, not alone to their generous support, but also to their active personal devotion. Only a fortnight before her death the deceased attended worship, and consequently her fellow-worshippers will deeply feel her decease. The interment took place at Knockbreda, on Tuesday, Dec. 31st, the service in the house and that at the graveside being conducted by the Minister of the First Presbyterian Church (the Rev. H. J. Rossington).

* *

DR. JOHN B. LOGAN.

Dr. John B. Logan, of the Dispensary House, Ballynure, passed away on Thursday night, November 21st, after a short illness of double pneumonia and influenza. He was a son of the late Dr. W. Logan, of Yorkshire, England, and Whitehead, County Antrim. Dr. Logan was appointed medical attendant at Ballynure almost five years ago. His kindly nature and his gentle disposition, and his great skill as a physician made him respected and loved, and his mercy to the poor, and his care for the rich, won him a host of friends, and the many people who came from far and near to see his last remains laid in Ballynure old graveyard testified to the very high esteem in which he was held.

The deceased gentleman was a great student. He took the highest place in his course of training as a student, and carried off the prizes. A teacher at the Queen's College said, "he knows all that we know." When he took up his duties at Ballynure he devoted his time and attention to it. He was a most dutiful man.

He had one hobby, and that was the study of philosophy. He was also a great lover of his country, and took a deep interest in its affairs, as his father before him did. At heart he was a most pious and devout man. His religion was seen in his works. He did not join himself to any social or secret society. He believed in personality and its power overcoming all these societies. He believed in our religion, and that it would finally win its way in society by the good men and the good work and the good characters and the holy lives and the testimonies which they bore and would bear. His last sentiments were, we must co-operate with God and His laws in order to succeed. The deceased gentleman leaves an aged mother and sister and his wife and one boy to mourn his loss, and the churches at Ballyclare and Raloo tender their heartfelt affection to the mourners in their bereavement. The services were conducted by Rev. J. M'Cleery in the Dispensary House, and at the graveside.

A baby girl has been born since his death.

* *

REV. JOHN JELLIE.

The death is announced, at his residence, near Carrickfergus, of Rev. John Jellie, in his ninety-fourth year, the demise taking place on November 25th. Mr. Jellie, in former days, held many positions in our ministry in the North of Ireland, namely—at Glenarm, 1852 to 1855; at Ravara, 1855 to 1859; at Moneyrea, 1859 to 1862; at York Street, Belfast, 1862 to 1873; finally at Cairncastle, 1876 to 1880. Since then he had lived very much retired from public notice.

* *

MISSES SARAH AND MARGARET MITCHELL.

It was our sad duty to record, in a recent issue, the death of Miss Jeannie Mitchell, one of the young members of the Newry Unitarian Church, and a

daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Mitchell, respected members of the congregation.

We have again to record a double bereavement in this same family in the deaths of Miss Sarah and Miss Margaret Mitchell, both of whom passed away during the influenza epidemic in the town, within a few days of each other.

Great sympathy has been expressed to the parents by all classes and creeds in the town, and the attendances at the respective funerals were a striking testimony to the esteem in which both the deceased and their parents were held.

The congregation has suffered severely within the past few years through death, several valued members having passed away. In the passing of these young friends the choir and Sunday School has suffered a great loss, both being devoted and earnest members.

* *

MRS. JAMES HUGHES.

Another member, Mrs. James Hughes, Canal Street, Newry, passed to her rest on November 23rd after a brief illness. Her loss is greatly regretted, her kindly disposition and ever ready helpfulness winning the esteem of a large circle of friends. The funeral took place on the following Monday in the Old Meeting House Green, the Rev. G. J. Slipper officiating.

OUR CHURCHES IN THE NEW YEAR.

By Rev. G. L. Phelps.

The changing of the Calendar affords a good opportunity for a backward glance, but this year specially so. We are passing from war to peace—such a war and such a peace. The whole world has been shaken, thrones have fallen, nations have passed through the furnace, and we know not yet what is to come out

The backward glance must bring a deep sense of humiliation in that our common Christianity proved so powerless to stay the terrible catastrophe; but it also brings devout gratitude for the spirit that nerved "heroic boys to hazard all in Freedom's fight," and called forth so much splendid service and generosity We were not absolutely faithful in our discipleship to the Prince of Peace or the war would have been averted. We have it in us to be absolutely faithful, or the war would not have revealed so much magnificent heroism and unstinted generosity.

As to spiritual stocktaking, there has been an immense amount of nonsense talked and written about the effect of the war on the religion of the soldiers. Comparatively few have come thereby to a clearer knowledge of spiritual realities. For the most part our brave lads have had to pass through experiences which must tend to blunt the spiritual faculties. They will not flock to the churches; they will be impatient with platitudes, and will have no use for theological and sectarian controversy. But they have learned to endure hardships; they have a newborn courage; they know as never before the meaning of sacrifice and comradeship. Here is something to start on, which is an essential part of religion.

And what of the future we have to face? The problems of peace are at least as great as those of war. No League of Nations will be effective to make the world safe for democracy which is not founded on righteousness and supported by peoples imbued with righteousness. And each nation will have its domestic problems. There are signs of a coming class war more bitter and terrible than the war just ended. The churches did not stay the one; can they prevent the other?

What of our own churches? We want a fresh courage and confidence to proclaim and apply our grand gospel of the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, the Soul's Immortality and Salvation by Character. Religion means little to many people to-day, because they have never had a rational faith set before them. Have we done our duty in this matter? But we must not only preach, we must apply. Let us seize the oppor-

tunity by supporting our new Union for Social Service, whose object is "To inspire Social Service with the Religious Spirit, and to direct the Religious Spirit towards Social Service." What fault there has been lies not in our faith, but in ourselves. A New Year and a new era awaits us. Forward be our watchword.

REPORTS.

Unity Guild.—It has been a marked feature of the meetings this season that the young people connected with our churches have been taking a greater interest in the doings of the Guild, and the attendances have been correspondingly larger. The opening night was one of the most successful in the history of the Society. Not only was there a large attendance, but there was a heartiness about the whole proceedings which must have been very gratifying to the organisers. It is a pity there were not more soldiers at the entertainment which was given on their behalf in the Central Hall on October 26th. Our people turned out in goodly numbers to receive them, but they seem to have mostly found a counter attraction elsewhere. At Mountpottinger excellent papers were delivered on Ladies' Night by Mrs. Rossington and Mrs. Eustace Thompson to an appreciative audience. It was noteworthy that the second half of the programme on this occasion was provided by members of the sterner sex. One wonders whether this was done to show, by contrast, the superiority of our new electors. Mr Philipson's "Night with Burns" was the best thing of the sort the writer has heard for a long time It was illustrated with lantern slides and songs, which were contributed by Mrs. Pickering, Mr. Foote, and our ever-ready secretary, Rev. M. Watkins.

The Annual Soiree will be held in the Central Hall on January 10th, and is to take the form of a whist drive and dance

Belfast: York Street.—On Friday evening, 13th December, a successful Re-union was held in the Lecture Hall, for the purpose of bringing together the members and friends of the congregation. The proceedings were opened with tea, the Misses A. Shanks, S. Allen, and W. Anderson seeing that the "inner man" was well and amply catered for. After tea the chair was occupied by the Rev. E. H. Pickering, M.A., who, in his opening remarks reminded those present of the purpose of the meeting, and followed this up by a bit of good, sound advice for the conduct of church matters. During the evening the Revs. R. M. King and J. A. Kelly also spoke, and their remarks were most instructive and encouraging. The Revs. G. V. Crook, H. J. Rossington, F. Woolley, and W. G. Anderson were also present to show their sympathy in the movement. The following rendered songs at intervals:—Miss A. Shanks, Messrs. J. Conkey, J. Hardy, and D. Ervine. Mr. A. J. Parkes acted as accompanist. The secretary reported having had numerous apologies owing to the "flu" and other causes, and undoubtedly "electionitis" claimed a good many who otherwise would have been present.

On Sunday afternoon, 15th December, at 3-30, a Musical Service was held and it proved to be the most successful function held in the church for many years, the music leaving nothing to be desired. The choir was augmented. The following solos were rendered:—"Divine Redeemer," by Miss A. M. Charleston; "Light in Darkness," Miss B. Clotworthy; "Comfort Ye," Mr. John Clarke; and "O Song Divine," Mr. William Tudor, who were ably assisted by Mr. J. H. M'Bratney, A.R.C.O. (Organist and Accompanist to the Belfast Philharmonic Society). The church was well filled, and all our local churches were represented in the gathering. The Rev. W. H. Townley Tilson, M.A., of Greyabbey, occupied the pulpit, and in a clever and inspiring address called upon all present to help and support the congregation by their sympathy and attendance. The arrangements for the service were carried out by the secretary (Mr. D. Ervine), who was loyally supported

by Messrs. J. Conkey and A. J. Parkes. The Church Committee wish to thank the many kind friends who by their presence made the service such a huge success.

* *

Ballycarry.—The Rev. W. G. and Mrs. Marsden have been presented with a well-filled wallet of Treasury Notes, the spontaneous gift of the congregation. Miss Service and Miss Hamilton on Tuesday evening called at the Manse, and, with a few explanatory words, handed over the gift to the Minister on behalf of the congregation. The ladies who took part as collectors were — Mesdames W. J. Millar, Shaw, Millar, and the Misses Service, Hamilton and Millar. On the following Sunday morning Mr. Marsden, ackniwledging the presentation, said :—" I must take this opportunity of acknowledging my very grateful thanks for the handsome present which so unexpectedly was made to me and Mrs. Marsden at the Manse on Tuesday evening last. In the first place I wish to thank those with whom the idea originated, and without whose zeal and work and in acting as collectors nothing would have been accomplished.

In the second place I wish to thank the members of the congregation (not forgetting kind friends outside) who, as I understand, were only too pleased to take part in the presentation. In regard to this substantial expression of your kindness, coming so unexpectedly, and at the immediate moment when even the necessaries of life are so costly, I can only tell you how very gratified I feel, and how very greatly I appreciate it."

* *

Dunmurry.—The congregation here have lost two sterling friends—Miss Sarah Roberts and her niece, Mrs. Wallis, formerly Miss Mabel Roberts, who passed away last month suddenly and almost together, their deaths being due to influenza. Both were for long members of the congregation, and were greatly attached to it, and were members of the choir, the former having given many years of service by her voice in connection with the praise, as did the latter, who also for some years, till her marriage and removal from the district, presided most acceptably at the organ. The very sudden removal of these two worthy members was a tragic experience for their relatives and friends. Their funerals were numerously attended, and took place from the same house, Auburn, Dunmurry, at the same hour, to the same graveyard, viz., that around the Old Meeting House, the services on the occasion having been conducted by Rev. J. A. Kelly. The Rev. Alex. Gordon, having occupied the pulpit the Sunday after their demise, made touching reference to the sad event, and expressed the sympathy of the congregation with the relatives in their bereavement.

* *

Holywood.—The Annual Meeting of the congregation was held in the schoolroom on Thursday, December 12th After tea had been served Mr. William Patterson took the chair, and the business part of the programme was at once proceeded with. The Chairman moved the adoption of the Committee's report and statement of accounts in an interesting speech. This was seconded by the treasurer, Mr. W. H. Niall Nelson, who announced that Mr. S. C. Davidson had promised to subscribe £5 to wipe off the adverse balance if the remainder was subscribed by other members of the congregation. It is gratifying to be able to announce that as a result of Mr. Nelson's appeal considerably more than the amount required has been subscribed, over £31 being forthcoming. Our best thanks are due to Mr. Davidson for his kind offer, and to the ladies and gentlemen who so promptly fulfilled the conditions. Mr. C. J. M'Kisack moved, and Mr. Hugh Shannon seconded a vote of thanks to the members of the choir for their services during the year. This was carried with acclamation. On the motion of Mr. F. A. Robinson, seconded by Mr. Hugh Erskine, the following were elected to the Church Committee :—Mrs. Neill, Messrs. W. K. Graham, E. A. Praeger, and W. M'Nair. The hon. secretary, the hon,

treasurer and the auditor were also re-elected. Mr. W. K. Graham was re-elected representative Governor of the Sullivan Schools. The business being concluded, an excellent musical programme followed, in which the following took part:—Miss Tate, Miss Hamilton, Mr. James M'Kisack, Rev. M. Watkins, and Mr. James Shannon. The programme was arranged by Miss Murphy, who also acted as accompanist. The tea-makers, those who had provided the entertainment, and the Chairman having been thanked, the singing of the National Anthem brought an enjoyable evening to a close.

On Tuesday, December 17th, a Sale of Work was held in the schoolroom, which resulted in over £14 being handed to the hon. treasurer to help pay for repairs of heating apparatus.

A number of reports are held over owing to pressure on our space.

DEATH.

PATTISON—At Ballaghmore, Ballymoney, during the night of 8-9 December, Jane Pattison, aged 92. Buried in the Old Churchyard on 10th December.

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